

**We Claim:**

1. A method for displaying patent marking information, the method comprising:

5 detecting one or more resources coupled to or comprised in a computer system;  
retrieving patent marking information corresponding to each of said one or more resources; and  
displaying said patent marking information.

10 2. The method of claim 1, wherein said one or more resources comprise one or more hardware devices coupled to the computer system.

15 3. The method of claim 1, wherein said one or more resources comprise one or more software programs installed on the computer system.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein said one or more resources comprise one or more hardware configuration programs configured on a programmable hardware element of a hardware device coupled to or comprised in the computer system.

20 5. The method of claim 1,  
wherein said one or more resources each stores patent marking information; and  
wherein said retrieving patent marking information comprises retrieving said patent marking information respectively from each of said one or more resources.

25 6. The method of claim 1,  
wherein said one or more resources each stores identification (ID) information which identifies the respective resource;  
wherein said detecting comprises retrieving said ID information; and

wherein said retrieving patent marking information is performed based on said ID information.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein said retrieving patent marking  
5 information comprises retrieving said patent marking information from a patent marking database comprised in the computer system.

8. The method of claim 7, further comprising:  
updating said patent marking database periodically.

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9. The method of claim 7, further comprising:  
updating said patent marking database when resources are detected whose patent  
marking information is not stored in said patent marking database.

10. The method of claim 6, wherein said retrieving patent marking  
15 information comprises retrieving said patent marking information from a database comprised in a server computer, wherein the server computer is coupled to the computer system via a network.

11. The method of claim 6, wherein said displaying said patent marking  
20 information further comprises displaying said ID information for each resource.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein said displaying said patent marking  
information comprises displaying said patent marking information on a computer display  
25 for a specified period of time.

13. The method of claim 1, wherein said displaying said patent marking information comprises displaying said patent marking information on a computer display when said detection occurs for the first time.

5 14. The method of claim 1, wherein said displaying said patent marking information on a computer display is performed in a periodic manner.

15 15. The method of claim 1, wherein said displaying said patent marking information on a computer display comprises displaying said patent marking information in a Graphical User Interface (GUI) presented on said computer display.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein said displaying said patent marking information in a Graphical User Interface comprises:

15 displaying said patent marking information in a pop-up dialog box, wherein said pop-up dialog box is operable to close upon receiving user input.

17. The method of claim 15,  
wherein said GUI includes one or more icons corresponding to said one or more resources, wherein said displaying said patent marking information comprises:  
20 displaying patent marking information for a first resource of said one or more resources when a user moves a cursor over an icon corresponding to said first resource.

18. The method of claim 15,  
25 wherein said GUI includes one or more icons corresponding to said one or more resources, wherein said displaying said patent marking information comprises:  
displaying the patent marking information for each resource proximate to the respective icon of each resource.

19. The method of claim 1, wherein said detecting, said retrieving, and said displaying are performed by a configuration software program executing on the computer system.

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20. The method of claim 1, wherein said detecting, said retrieving, and said displaying are performed by an operating system executing on the computer system.

21. The method of claim 1, wherein said detecting, said retrieving, and said displaying are performed upon one or more of:

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a change in the one or more resources coupled to or comprised in the computer system; and

a change of user of the computer system.

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22. The method of claim 21, wherein said change of user comprises one or both of:

a user logging onto the computer system for the first time; and

a first user logging off of the computer system followed by a second user logging onto the computer system.

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23. The method of claim 1, wherein said detecting one or more resources comprises:

executing "plug and play" software to detect the one or more resources.

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24. A system for displaying patent marking information, the system comprising:

a computer system, comprising:

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a memory which is operable to store program instructions;  
a processor coupled to said memory; and  
a display coupled to said processor and to said memory; and  
one or more resources coupled to or comprised in the computer system;  
5 wherein said program instructions are executable by said processor to perform:  
detecting said one or more resources;  
retrieving patent marking information corresponding respectively to each  
of said one or more resources; and  
displaying said patent marking information on said display.

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25. The system of claim 24, wherein said one or more resources comprise one  
or more of:  
one or more hardware devices coupled to the computer system; and  
one or more software programs installed on the computer system.

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26. The system of claim 24, wherein said one or more resources comprise one  
or more hardware configuration programs configured on a programmable hardware  
element of a hardware device coupled to or comprised in the computer system.

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27. The system of claim 24,  
wherein said one or more resources each comprise patent marking information;  
and  
wherein said retrieving patent marking information comprises retrieving said  
patent marking information respectively from each of said one or more resources.

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28. The system of claim 24,  
wherein said one or more resources each includes identification (ID) information  
which identifies the respective resource;

wherein said detecting comprises retrieving said ID information; and  
wherein said retrieving patent marking information is performed based on said ID  
information.

5           29.     The system of claim 28,  
              wherein said memory further stores a patent marking database; and  
              wherein said retrieving patent marking information comprises retrieving said  
patent marking information from said patent marking database.

10           30.     The system of claim 28, further comprising:  
              a server computer coupled to the computer system via a network, wherein said  
server computer stores a database of patent marking information;  
              wherein said retrieving patent marking information comprises retrieving said  
patent marking information from said database comprised in the server computer.

15           31.     The system of claim 24,  
              wherein said program instructions are further executable to implement a Graphical  
User Interface (GUI), wherein said GUI is presented on said display; and  
              wherein said displaying said patent marking information on said display comprises  
20     displaying said patent marking information in said GUI presented on said display.

              32.     The system of claim 31,  
              wherein said GUI includes one or more icons corresponding to said one or more  
resources, wherein said displaying said patent marking information comprises:  
25           displaying patent marking information for a first resource of said one or  
more resources when a user moves a cursor over an icon corresponding to said first  
resource.

33. The system of claim 24,

wherein said GUI includes one or more icons corresponding to said one or more resources, wherein said displaying said patent marking information comprises:

displaying the patent marking information for each resource proximate to the  
5 respective icon of each resource.

34. The system of claim 24, wherein said program instructions are comprised in a configuration software program, and wherein said detecting, said retrieving, and said displaying are performed by the configuration software program executing on the computer  
10 system.

35. The system of claim 24, wherein said program instructions are comprised in an operating system executing on the computer system, and wherein said detecting, said retrieving, and said displaying are performed by said operating system.  
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36. A memory medium which is operable to store program instructions, wherein said program instructions are executable by a processor to perform:  
detecting one or more resources coupled to or comprised in a computer system;  
20 retrieving patent marking information corresponding respectively to each of said one or more resources; and  
displaying said patent marking information on a display.

37. The memory medium of claim 36, wherein said one or more resources  
25 comprise one or more hardware devices coupled to the computer system.

38. The memory medium of claim 36, wherein said one or more resources comprise one or more software programs installed on the computer system.

39. The memory medium of claim 36, wherein said one or more resources comprise one or more hardware configuration programs configured on a programmable hardware element of a hardware device coupled to or comprised in the computer system.

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40. The memory medium of claim 36,  
wherein said one or more resources each stores patent marking information; and  
wherein said retrieving patent marking information comprises retrieving said patent marking information respectively from each of said one or more resources.

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41. The memory medium of claim 36,  
wherein said one or more resources each stores identification (ID) information which identifies the respective resource;  
wherein said detecting comprises retrieving said ID information; and  
15 wherein said retrieving patent marking information is performed based on said ID information.

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42. The memory medium of claim 41,  
wherein said memory medium further stores a patent marking database; and  
wherein said retrieving patent marking information comprises retrieving said patent marking information from said patent marking database.

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43. The memory medium of claim 42, wherein said program instructions are further executable to perform:  
updating said patent marking database periodically.

44. The memory medium of claim 42, wherein said program instructions are further executable to perform:



updating said patent marking database when resources are detected whose patent marking information is not stored in said patent marking database.

45. The memory medium of claim 41, wherein said program instructions are  
5 further executable to perform:

accessing a server computer coupled to the computer system via a network,  
wherein said server computer stores a database of patent marking information;

wherein said retrieving patent marking information comprises retrieving said  
patent marking information from said database comprised in the server computer.

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46. The memory medium of claim 41, wherein said displaying said patent  
marking information further comprises displaying said ID information for each resource.

47. The memory medium of claim 36, wherein said displaying said patent  
15 marking information comprises displaying said patent marking information for a  
specified period of time.

48. The memory medium of claim 36, wherein said displaying said patent  
marking information comprises displaying said patent marking information when said  
20 detection occurs for the first time.

49. The memory medium of claim 36,  
wherein said program instructions are further executable to implement a Graphical  
User Interface (GUI), wherein said GUI is displayed on said display; and  
25 wherein said displaying said patent marking information comprises displaying said  
patent marking information in said GUI.

50. The memory medium of claim 49, wherein said displaying said patent marking information in a Graphical User Interface comprises:

displaying said patent marking information in a pop-up dialog box, wherein said pop-up dialog box is operable to close upon receiving user input.

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51. The memory medium of claim 49,

wherein said GUI includes one or more icons corresponding to said one or more resources, wherein said displaying said patent marking information comprises:

displaying patent marking information for a first resource of said one or more resources when a user moves a cursor over an icon corresponding to said first resource.

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52. The memory medium of claim 49,

wherein said GUI includes one or more icons corresponding to said one or more resources, wherein said displaying said patent marking information comprises:

displaying the patent marking information for each resource proximate to the respective icon of each resource.

53. The memory medium of claim 36, wherein said program instructions are comprised in a configuration software program, and wherein said detecting, said retrieving, and said displaying are performed by the configuration software program executing on the computer system.

54. The memory medium of claim 36, wherein said program instructions are comprised in an operating system executing on the computer system, and wherein said detecting, said retrieving, and said displaying are performed by said operating system.

55. The memory medium of claim 36, wherein said detecting one or more resources comprises:

executing "plug and play" software to detect the one or more resources.

5 56. The memory medium of claim 36, wherein said detecting, said retrieving, and said displaying are performed upon one or more of:

a change in the one or more resources coupled to or comprised in the computer system; and

a change of user of the computer system.

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57. The memory medium of claim 56, wherein said change of user comprises one or both of:

a user logging onto the computer system for the first time; and

15 a first user logging off of the computer system followed by a second user logging onto the computer system.

58. A computer based method for displaying patent marking information, the method comprising:

20 downloading one or more software products to a computer system from a server over a network;

retrieving patent marking information corresponding to each of said one or more software products; and

displaying said patent marking information.

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59. The method of claim 58, further comprising:

installing said one or more software products prior to said retrieving.

60. The method of claim 58, wherein said retrieving patent marking information corresponding to each of said one or more software products comprises:

retrieving identification (ID) information from each of said one or more software products; and

5 retrieving patent marking information corresponding to each of said one or more software products based on said ID information.

61. The method of claim 60, wherein said displaying said patent marking information further comprises displaying said ID information for each software product.

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62. The method of claim 58,

wherein said one or more software products each comprises patent marking information; and

15 wherein said retrieving patent marking information comprises retrieving said patent marking information respectively from each of said one or more software products.

63. The method of claim 58, wherein said retrieving patent marking information comprises retrieving said patent marking information from a database comprised in the computer system.

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64. The method of claim 58, wherein said retrieving patent marking information comprises retrieving said patent marking information from a database comprised in the server computer.

25 65. The method of claim 58, wherein said retrieving patent marking information comprises retrieving said patent marking information from a database comprised in a second different server computer, wherein the second server computer is coupled to the computer system via a network.

66. The method of claim 58, wherein said one or more software products comprises a hardware configuration program for configuring a programmable hardware element comprised in a hardware device coupled to the computer system.

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67. The method of claim 58, wherein said displaying said patent marking information comprises displaying said patent marking information on a computer display for a period of time.

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68. The method of claim 58, wherein said displaying said patent marking information on a computer display comprises displaying said patent marking information in a Graphical User Interface (GUI) presented on a computer display.

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69. The method of claim 68, wherein said displaying said patent marking information in a Graphical User Interface comprises:

displaying said patent marking information in a pop-up dialog box, wherein said pop-up dialog box is operable to close upon receiving user input.

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70. The method of claim 68, wherein said GUI is operable to display icons corresponding to said one or more software products, wherein said displaying said patent marking information comprises:

displaying patent marking information for a first software product of said one or more software products when a user moves a cursor over an icon corresponding to said first software product.

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71. The method of claim 68, wherein said GUI includes one or more icons corresponding to said one or more software products, wherein said displaying said patent marking information comprises:

displaying the patent marking information for each software product proximate to the respective icon of each software product.

72. The method of claim 58, wherein said retrieving and said displaying are performed by a configuration software program executing on the computer system.

73. The method of claim 58, wherein said retrieving and said displaying are performed by an operating system executing on the computer system.

74. The method of claim 58, further comprising:  
ordering said one or more software products prior to said downloading.

75. The method of claim 74, wherein said ordering said one or more software products prior to said downloading comprises:  
accessing an e-commerce server over the network, wherein said e-commerce server comprises an e-commerce system; and  
providing user input indicating said one or more software products.

76. The method of claim 75, wherein said ordering said one or more software products prior to said downloading further comprises:  
providing payment information to said e-commerce system, wherein said payment information is usable to purchase said one or more software products.

77. The method of claim 58, wherein said one or more software products includes one or more of:  
an application program;  
a driver program; and  
a hardware configuration program.

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78. The method of claim 58, further comprising:  
ordering one or more hardware products prior to said downloading;  
wherein at least one of said one or more software products comprises  
5 configuration information for at least one of said one or more hardware products.

79. The method of claim 78, wherein said at least one of said one or more  
hardware products comprises a programmable hardware element, and wherein said  
configuration information comprises a hardware configuration program for said  
10 programmable hardware element.

80. The method of claim 78, wherein said ordering said one or more hardware  
products prior to said downloading comprises:  
accessing an e-commerce server over the network, wherein said e-commerce  
15 server comprises an e-commerce system; and  
indicating said one or more hardware products.

81. The method of claim 80, wherein said ordering said one or more hardware  
products prior to said downloading further comprises:  
20 providing payment information to said e-commerce system, wherein said payment  
information is usable to purchase said one or more hardware products.

82. A system for displaying patent marking information, the system  
comprising:  
25 a computer system, comprising:  
a memory which is operable to store patent marking software and one or  
more software programs;  
a processor coupled to said memory; and

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a display coupled to said processor and to said memory;  
wherein said patent marking software is executable by said processor to perform:  
detecting said one or more software programs;  
retrieving patent marking information corresponding respectively to each  
5 of said one or more software programs; and  
displaying said patent marking information on said display.

83. The system of claim 82,  
wherein each of said one or more software programs includes patent marking  
10 information;

wherein said retrieving patent marking information comprises retrieving said  
patent marking information from said one or more software programs.

84. The system of claim 82,  
15 wherein said memory is further operable to store a patent marking database;  
wherein each of said one or more software programs includes identification (ID)  
information; and

wherein said retrieving patent marking information comprises:  
retrieving said ID information from each of said one or more software  
20 programs; and  
retrieving said patent marking information from said patent marking  
database based on said ID information.

25 85. A system for displaying patent marking information, the system  
comprising:

a computer system, comprising:



a memory which is operable to store patent marking software and one or more software programs;

a processor coupled to said memory; and

a display coupled to said processor and to said memory; and

5 a server computer coupled to the computer system via a network, wherein said server computer stores a patent marking database;

wherein said patent marking software is executable by said processor to perform:

detecting said one or more software programs, wherein said detecting comprises identifying each of said one or more software programs;

10 retrieving patent marking information corresponding respectively to each of said one or more software programs from said patent marking database in response to said identifying; and

displaying said patent marking information on said display.

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86. A system for displaying patent marking information, the system comprising:

a computer system, comprising:

a memory which is operable to store patent marking software;

20 a processor coupled to said memory; and

a display coupled to said processor and to said memory;

one or more hardware devices coupled to said computer system; and

wherein said patent marking software is executable by said processor to perform:

25 detecting said one or more hardware devices, wherein said detecting comprises identifying each of said one or more hardware devices;

retrieving patent marking information corresponding respectively to each of said one or more hardware devices in response to said identifying; and

displaying said patent marking information on said display.

87. The system of claim 86,  
wherein each of said one or more hardware devices stores patent marking  
information;

5 wherein said retrieving patent marking information comprises retrieving said  
patent marking information from said one or more hardware devices.

88. The system of claim 86,  
wherein said memory is further operable to store a patent marking database;  
10 wherein each of said one or more hardware devices stores identification (ID)  
information; and

wherein said retrieving patent marking information comprises:  
retrieving said ID information from each of said one or more hardware  
devices; and  
15 retrieving said patent marking information from said patent marking  
database based on said ID information.

89. A system for displaying patent marking information, the system  
20 comprising:

means for downloading one or more software products from a server computer  
system to a host computer system;

means for retrieving patent marking information corresponding respectively to  
each of said one or more software products; and

25 means for displaying said patent marking information.

90. The system of claim 89,

wherein said one or more software products each comprise patent marking information; and

wherein said retrieving patent marking information comprises retrieving said patent marking information respectively from each of said one or more software products.

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91. The system of claim 89,

wherein said one or more software products each includes identification (ID) information which identifies the respective resource;

wherein said detecting comprises retrieving said ID information; and

10 wherein said retrieving patent marking information is performed based on said ID information.

92. A memory medium which is operable to store program instructions, wherein said program instructions are executable by a processor to perform:

15 downloading one or more software products from a server computer system to a host computer system;

retrieving patent marking information corresponding respectively to each of said one or more software products; and

displaying said patent marking information on a display.

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93. A system for displaying patent marking information, the system comprising:

a computer system, comprising:

25 a memory which is operable to store patent marking software;

a processor coupled to said memory; and

a display coupled to said processor and to said memory;

one or more hardware devices coupled to said computer system; and

a server computer coupled to the computer system via a network, wherein said server computer stores a patent marking database;

wherein said patent marking software is executable by said processor to perform:

detecting said one or more hardware devices, wherein said detecting  
5 comprises identifying each of said one or more hardware devices;

retrieving patent marking information corresponding respectively to each  
of said one or more hardware devices from said patent marking database in response to  
said identifying; and

displaying said patent marking information on said display.

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94. A system for displaying patent marking information, the system  
comprising:

means for detecting one or more resources coupled to or comprised in a computer  
15 system;

means for retrieving patent marking information corresponding respectively to  
each of said one or more resources; and

means for displaying said patent marking information.

20 95. The system of claim 94, wherein said one or more resources comprise one  
or more hardware devices coupled to the computer system.

96. The system of claim 94, wherein said one or more resources comprise one  
or more software programs installed on the computer system.

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97. The system of claim 94, wherein said one or more resources comprise one  
or more hardware configuration programs configured on a programmable hardware  
element of a hardware device coupled to or comprised in the computer system.

98. The system of claim 94,  
wherein said one or more resources each comprise patent marking information;  
and

5 wherein said retrieving patent marking information comprises retrieving said  
patent marking information respectively from each of said one or more resources.

99. The system of claim 94,  
wherein said one or more resources each includes identification (ID) information  
10 which identifies the respective resource;  
wherein said detecting comprises retrieving said ID information; and  
wherein said retrieving patent marking information is performed based on said ID  
information.

15 100. A system for displaying patent marking information, the system  
comprising:

a computer system, comprising:

20 a memory which is operable to store patent marking software and one or  
more software programs;

a processor coupled to said memory; and

a display coupled to said processor and to said memory;

wherein said patent marking software is executable by said processor to perform:

downloading said one or more software programs from a server computer

25 system;

retrieving patent marking information corresponding respectively to each  
of said one or more software programs; and

displaying said patent marking information on said display.

101. The system of claim 100,  
wherein each of said one or more software programs includes patent marking  
information;

5 wherein said retrieving patent marking information comprises retrieving said  
patent marking information from said one or more software programs.

102. The system of claim 100,  
wherein said memory is further operable to store a patent marking database;  
10 wherein each of said one or more software programs includes identification (ID)  
information; and

wherein said retrieving patent marking information comprises:  
retrieving said ID information from each of said one or more software  
programs; and  
15 retrieving said patent marking information from said patent marking  
database based on said ID information.

103. The system of claim 100,  
wherein said server computer system is operable to store a patent marking  
20 database;

wherein each of said one or more software programs includes identification (ID)  
information; and

wherein said retrieving patent marking information comprises:  
retrieving said ID information from each of said one or more software  
25 programs;

accessing said server computer system; and  
retrieving said patent marking information from said patent marking  
database based on said ID information.

104. The system of claim 100, further comprising:

a patent marking information server computer system coupled to said computer system via a network;

5 wherein said patent marking information server computer system stores a patent marking database;

wherein each of said one or more software programs includes identification (ID) information; and

wherein said retrieving patent marking information comprises:

10 retrieving said ID information from each of said one or more software programs;

accessing said patent marking information server computer system; and

retrieving said patent marking information from said patent marking database based on said ID information.

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